

families who have made lasting contributions to our communities and contributed to the economic vitality of our nation. This bill does not propose substantial new relief, but only a continuation of the prior relief. Last year's temporary extension to April 30, 2001 was designed to benefit immigrants who were in the country by December 21, 2000. This bill will extend the deadline to provide this group of immigrants with more time to file their petitions.

I know that some of my colleagues support the extension, but had concerns with our bill. We worked with them to develop an acceptable compromise. Our bill, with an amendment offered by Senator KYL reflects our compromise. This compromise requires immigrants benefitting from the extension to show that their family or employment relationship existed on or before August 15, 2001. They will have until April 30, 2002 or 4 months from the issuance of regulations to file their applications with the INS.

Some critics are concerned about fraudulent marriages. But the INS, and not Congress, is in the best position to determine whether a case is fraudulent. The INS closely scrutinizes applications based on recent marriages. Under the current law, the INS conducts extensive interviews before deciding these cases, often separately questioning the couples. Anyone who has been married less than 2 years when their application is approved is required to attend a second INS interview 2 years later, in which INS again reviews the case to determine whether there is a bona fide marriage. Only after the second interview will a recently married immigrant receive a permanent green card.

In INS determines that an individual has committed marriage fraud, that person is permanently barred from receiving a green card and can be criminally prosecuted. Many of us feel that this new restriction is unnecessary, and will lead to needless confusion, delay and hardship. But in the spirit of compromise, we accepted this amendment.

I am pleased that we are moving this bill forward, as this legislation will keep immigrant families together. We cannot continue to delay; otherwise, the purpose of this legislation—to prevent the separation of immigrant families—will be defeated. This measure is of critical importance to Mexican President Vicente Fox, who is in Washington for an historic visit. Our two countries are negotiating important immigration policies which will profoundly affect and benefit our peoples and our economies. Extension of section 245(i) is an immediate and important first step in these negotiations.

Finally, if we are truly to live up to our history and heritage as a nation of immigrants, we must also address the

pressing needs of uniting other families separated by our current immigration laws, and meeting the needs of our labor market. I look forward to working with my colleagues to meet these great challenges, and am pleased that the Senate has approved this bill as a downpayment on the reforms that are so long overdue.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this legislation accomplishes a goal supported by President Bush and a bipartisan coalition of Senators—making it easier for people who are eligible to become legal permanent residents to apply for their green cards without leaving the United States. There could not be a more opportune time to pass this bill than during the visit of President Vicente Fox to our nation, and I applaud the Majority Leader for making passage today possible. I hope that the approval of this bill serves as a signal of the Congress' willingness to work with the Mexican Government to achieve our common goals, and to maintain fair immigration policies.

I was pleased to schedule this bill for a markup as soon as I became Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Although I would have preferred that the Committee report the bill as it was introduced, I am glad that a compromise was reached that allowed the bill to receive the Committee's support and make it to the floor of the Senate.

This bill extends section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which expired on April 30, 2001. Section 245(i) allows foreign-born people who are present in the United States and eligible for legal permanent residency to apply for that status from within the country instead of having to return to their nation of origin to apply. We reauthorized section 245(i) last year, but only for a four-month period. Many eligible immigrants were unable to find attorneys and submit applications during that brief period.

There are at least three good reasons to extend 245(i). First, it allows families to stay together in the United States instead of forcing family members to return to their native countries to apply for their green cards. Second, because immigrants can also qualify to become legal permanent residents based on an employment relationship, extending 245(i) will allow businesses to retain vital employees. Third, because immigrants have to pay a \$1000 fee to apply under 245(i), this program raises millions of dollars for the Federal treasury.

Senators KENNEDY and HAGEL deserve great credit for their sponsorship of and support for this bill. I am pleased that the Senate has approved this bipartisan bill to keep families together, and I urge the House to follow the Senate's lead.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, let me briefly say that this is extremely important. With President Fox in the

country, this sends a message to him that we really are trying to work toward making things easier in relations between the United States and Mexico. But this has wide application to places other than Mexico. It is important legislation. It is something we worked on very hard. We almost got it done toward the end of last year. It is now completed.

We hope the House will expeditiously move forward on this matter. The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee has been involved in this, Representative SENSENBRENNER. We are grateful for everyone's cooperation.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 2500

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, September 10, at 12 noon, the Senate proceed to the consideration of calendar No. 96, H.R. 2500, the Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State appropriations bill; that once the bill is reported, the majority manager or his designee be recognized to offer the text of the Senate committee reported bill as a substitute amendment, and that the amendment be considered agreed to as original text for the purpose of further amendments, provided that no points of order be waived by this agreement.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBSERVANCE OF THE OLYMPIC TRUCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of calendar No. 112, S. Res. 126.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. Res. 126) expressing the sense of the Senate regarding observance of the Olympic Truce.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution and preamble be agreed to en bloc, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating thereto be printed in the RECORD, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 126) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

The resolution, with its preamble, reads as follows:

S. RES. 126

Whereas the Olympic Games are a unique opportunity for international cooperation